1: Middleton E-4 (no date) 1953 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

INTRODUCTION

101 The Kikuyu and Kamba are the largest of the North-east Bantu-speaking tribes, the former being the largest tribe in East Africa. They are closely related one to the other and to the Coastal Bantu.[1] They have come into close contact with Europeans since the beginning of the century, and the Kikuyu especially have featured in the modern political movements in Kenya arising largely from alienation of land to European settlers. These events are not dealt with in this survey of the literature, which is devoted to purely ethnographic material.

114 There is probably more literature on these peoples than on any other groups in East Africa. None of it, however, is the work of modern social anthropologists, although both tribes were early studied by trained ethnographers; Routledge went to Kikuyu in 1902, and Lindblom to Kamba in 1910–12. Both tribes have at times been administered by officers who have written on them—Dundas, Hobley, Lambert and Penwill—all of whose accounts are reliable and profuse. There are two other full-length books on the Kikuyu, one by Kenyatta, a Kikuyu who received some anthropological training, the other by Cagnolo, a Catholic missionary. The result of this mass of material is that many aspects of the cultures of these tribes have been described at great length and in considerable detail, but information as to some of the aspects of social organization which today are regarded as important, such as the territorial, clan, age-set and age-grade systems, is seriously deficient. Information as to land tenure, law, and main cultural details, however, is fairly good.

The Northern Kikuyu tribes, living to the east and south-east of Mount Kenya, have hardly been studied: there are accounts by two administrators, Orde-Browne and Lambert, and little more.

The Kikuyu and Kamba are large groups, and details of culture and organization apparently vary considerably from one area to another. It has not been possible to take these variations into account in most cases, so that the information available is at times inconsistent, and it has been difficult to reconcile many statements. In spite of the mass of material available, a modern study of these tribes is still needed.[2]

The accounts of these peoples have been written at various times since the beginning of the century. Generally the date of an account has not been taken into consideration, and the societies have been described as they seem to have been traditionally, omitting the effects modern developments have had on them. This is not ideal and results in some distortion, but in a compilation of this sort, where the available material is inadequate, it is not feasible to do otherwise.

[p. ix]

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[1] See Prins, 1952.
[2] See Schapera, 1949.

1: Middleton E-4 (no date) 1953 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

I. KIKUYU TRIBES

TRIBAL AND SUB-TRIBAL GROUPINGS AND DEMOGRAPHY

Nomenclature and Location

The present-day Central Province of Kenya includes two Bantu-speaking groups, the Kikuyu and the Kamba tribes. The Kikuyu[1] tribes consist of the Kikuyu proper and a cluster of smaller groups living on the eastern and southern slopes of Mount Kenya, to the north of the Kikuyu proper. They are apparently all related in physical character, culture and language.

The Kamba are dealt with separately in Section II of this volume (pp. 72–95).

The Kikuyu tribes inhabit five administrative Districts: Kiambu, Fort Hall, Nyeri, Embu, and Meru, which stretch in a belt from south to north. Kiambu in the south is within a few miles of Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, and has been broken up into several small sections separated by the blocks of European farms on land beside the railway.

The Kikuyu proper live in two main areas: Metume (north of the Chania River) and Karuwa (south of the Chania). Today Karuwa corresponds to the District of Kiambu, while Metume comprises the Districts of Fort Hall and Nyeri, the latter including the area traditionally called Gaki.[2]

Embu District is occupied by the Embu, the Mbere, the Ndia and the Kichugu, the two latter usually being referred to as the Ndia Kikuyu and Kichugu Kikuyu, who are best regarded as Kikuyu although there are slight cultural differences.

Meru District is occupied by several tribal groups: Tigania, Igembe, Imenti, Miutini, Igoji, Mwimbi, Muthambi, Tharaka and Chuka, all of which, with the exception of Tharaka and Chuka, are traditionally part of the so-called "Meru," perhaps a territorial rather than a tribal name. Igoji is closely related to Mwimbi and Muthambi, and these three as a group are regarded as being a sub-division of Imenti but territorially separated from it by the Miutini, relations of the Chuka. The Chuka are very distinct, physically and culturally, from these other groups. The Tharaka seem to have affinities with both Meru and Kamba, and Lambert suggests that they are in fact "an aggregation of offshoots (possibly outcasts) from various tribes, including Meru, Chuka, Mbere and Kamba."[3] Today Meru District contains five Divisions, those of Igembe, Tigania, Imenti, Tharaka and Chuka, the last containing the sections of Chuka, Miutini, Igoji, Mwimbi and Muthambi.

The southern boundary of Kikuyu is about 6,000 feet above sea level and follows the edge of the Masai plains where they give way to the wooded and well-watered hills of Kiambu. In the east Kikuyu is bounded by the Athi plains, occupied by Masai, the Ulu Hills, occupied by Kamba, and the Tana River, the boundary between Tharaka and Kamba. In the west Kikuyu stretches to the peaks of the Aberdare Range, Kinangop and Settima, which mark the boundary between Kikuyu and Masai. Only to the north-east do the wooded Kikuyu highlands continue northwards to the Nyombeni Range, and in this north-eastern extension live the Embu and

[1] The correct designations are MuKikuyu (pl. AKikuyu) for the people, UKikuyu for the country, and KiKikuyu for the language. The phonetic value of the word is more accurately rendered by Gekuyu or Gekoyo, but it is more convenient to use the customary spelling Kikuyu, which will refer to the Kikuyu proper only (Central and South Kikuyu: see below). The spelling used in this paper will be that in customary use; phonetic spelling will not be adopted.

The word Kikuyu may be derived from *kuyu* (fig-tree); (see Routledge, 1910, p. 1; Kenyatta, 1938, p. 257).

[2] Lambert, 1950, p. 4. The terminology is confusing, since "Kikuyu" is generally used to refer only to the inhabitants of Kiambu, Fort Hall, and Nyeri Districts. When I speak of the "Kikuyu tribes" I refer to the entire group; when I speak of "Kikuyu," I refer to the Kikuyu "proper," those of these three Districts only.

[3] Lambert, 1950, pp. 1–3.

[There are no pp. 1–10 in the text.]

1: Middleton E-4 (no date) 1953 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

101 Meru. The slopes of Mount Kenya are occupied up to about 7,000 feet. North of
131 Mount Kenya and the Nyombeni Range are the arid deserts of the Northern Frontier Province, occupied by Samburu, Boran, Somali and other Hamitic-speaking peoples.

133 The land occupied by the Kikuyu tribes is thus a geographically distinct region, consisting of the high plateau, dominated by the massifs of Mount Kenya and the Aberdares, which forms that part of the Kenya Highlands to the east of the Rift Valley. It is a homogeneous zone bounded and demarcated ecologically by plains or high ranges. The plains to the north consist of lavas unsuited for agriculture; east, north-west and south the plains are suitable only for cattle-keeping, and over 7,000 feet the slopes of Mount Kenya and the Aberdares are too high to support crops.[1]

Demographic Data

162 The population of the Kikuyu tribes in 1948 was as follows:[2]

District	*Tribe*	*Population*	*Area in sq. miles*[3]	*Average density per sq. mile*
Kiambu	Kikuyu	251,884	324	777
Fort Hall	"	300,355	583	515
Nyeri	"	179,956	336	536
Embu	Embu	61,747		
	Mbere	29,778		
	Ndia	66,680	1,234	163
	Kichuga	42,727		
Meru	Meru	198,789		
	Mwimbi	19,020		
	Muthambi	5,491	1,371	168
	Chuka	18,480		
	Tharaka	16,505		

There were also many Kikuyu dispersed in other Districts:

District	*Tribe*	*Population*
Nairobi	Kikuyu	51,475
	Embu	4,238
Thika	Kikuyu	21,439
Kitui	Meru	5,101
Nanyuki	Kikuyu	23,287
	Meru	2,921
Trans-Nzoia	Kikuyu	2,219
Uasin Gishu	Kikuyu	12,907
Nakuru	Kikuyu	130,303
Laikipia	Kikuyu	28,068
Mombasa	Kikuyu	3,304

Total Kikuyu population for Kenya in 1948 was:

Kiambu Kikuyu	388,162
Fort Hall Kikuyu	384,851
Nyeri Kikuyu	253,328
	1,026,341

161 Figures showing the rate of increase of population in Kikuyu are not satisfactory. They are available for South Nyeri over the period 1936–1944, and show an increase from approximately 142,000 to 166,000; during this period the average annual increase of males was 2.56%. The total increase rate for the Kikuyu Districts

[1] See Fitzgerald, 1948, p. 253; Hobley, 1938, p. 319.

[2] From published figures of the East African Census, 1948, except for figures for Meru which are from Lambert, 1950, p. 154: the Census figures are given for Locations in Meru, which do not show tribal composition. These figures show only Kikuyu living in these Districts (i.e., they exclude a small minority of immigrants and settlers of different tribal origin who live in the Districts).

[3] These figures exclude public grazing areas and forest reserves, which together come to 2,268 square miles.

3: Leakey E-5 (ca. 1925-1952) 1952
FL10 Kikuyu FL10

PART ONE
The Kikuyu before the coming of the European

I
THE KIKUYU AND THEIR LAND

The Kikuyu tribe, or, as they call themselves, the Agikuyu, is one of the Bantu-speaking peoples of East Africa and the biggest and most important tribe in Kenya. The Mau Mau terrorist movement which is, at the moment, causing so much trouble, is composed almost entirely of Kikuyu people. In consequence, if we are to understand the underlying causes which made it possible for the movement to come into being and to reach the proportions which it has reached, we must know something of the history and customs of the Kikuyu and, still more, we must understand their relationship over the years with the British Government and the other Europeans who have settled in Kenya.

The Kikuyu traditionally trace their origin to a woman Muumbi, who had as husband and father of her children one Gikuyu. The offspring of Muumbi and Gikuyu are regarded as the founders of the nine Kikuyu clans and each clan is named after one of them. According to tradition the Kikuyu first started as a tribe in the Fort Hall district, the exact point of origin supposedly being at 'Mukuruwe wa Gathanga', marked by a large acacia or *Mukuruwe* tree. As the descendants of Muumbi grew in numbers and multiplied they first of all spread over the area which is now the Fort Hall or Muranga district, felling the forest and carving out fields and gardens for themselves and their children. Tradition relates that the only inhabitants before the spread of the Kikuyu and their occupation of this area were a people of small stature and hideous features known as the Agumba, who 'lived in holes in the ground' into which they disappeared whenever they were frightened.

5 Lambert G-5 (ca. 1935-1950) 1950 FL10 Kikuyu FL10
Chuka FL5

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SKETCH MAP OF THE KIKUYU LAND UNIT

SHOWING APPROXIMATE DISTRIBUTION OF TRIBES

SCALE: 1:1,000,000

[p. ii c]

5:Lambert--1 G-5 (ca. 1935-1950) 1950 FL10 Kikuyu FL10
Chuka FL5

CHAPTER I

GENERAL DESCRIPTION

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[p. 1] The Kikuyu Land Unit is defined in the first Schedule to the Native Lands Trust Ordinance No. 28 of 1938 and the tribes (1) living therein are the Meru, Mwimbi, Muthambi, Tharaka, Chuka, Embu, Mbere, Gichugu, Ndia and Kikuyu (2). The first five occupy the Meru District, the next four the Embu District, and the last the three districts of Nyeri, Fort Hall and Kiambu. There is a small degree of overlapping, but with one exception district boundaries follow tribal boundaries very closely. A remnant of the Dorobo, still comparatively unabsorbed, lives in the Kiambu District.

1. This use of the word is not intended to imply the complete social independence of the units named.

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2. The spelling of African words adopted in this report, except where they occur in direct quotations, is that most commonly used in official documents. But even in such documents there are many variants. Mwimbi frequently appears as Wimbe, Mbere as Emberre, and Chuka occasionally as Suka. In all the dialects in the Land Unit an unvoiced dental or velar plosive or fricative followed by another tends to become voiced (an exhibition of Dahl's law) and the degree of voicing varies not only from tribe to tribe but even from individual to individual, so that distinction is sometimes difficult to the untrained European ear; we therefore find Gikuyu as well as Kikuyu, Kichugu as well as Gichugu. The tsh sound and its variants are written ch in this report, not c, which is commonly used by missionaries. The bilabial v of Embu, Mbere, etc., sometimes occurs as b, sometimes as v. The half-closed e (or half-open i) is, in ordinary English spelling, sometimes rendered e, sometimes i.

[p. 4]

The Kikuyu Group

C K 101 It seems probable that the Embu, Gichugu, and Ndia are related to the Kikuyu, in that order of remoteness, the Embu certainly being so remote as to have the right to consider themselves a separate tribe. In baraza in 1929 the Embu spokesman told the Committee on Native Land Tenure—"As far as our tradition goes we (Embu) do not originate from the Kikuyu or the Akamba. We are quite distinct from the Kikuyu". But two Embu witnesses before the Land Commission stated that they were Kikuyu as well as Embu, and Chief Kombo of the Mbere, a tribe which claims relationship with the Embu and joins with them in the ceremonial handing-over from generation to generation, told the Land Commission—"I belong to the Mbere tribe, i.e. the Mbere section of the Kikuyu tribe". By then political influence had been at work.

K 101 The Kikuyu people, who constitute by far the largest tribe in the Land Unit, show considerable uniformity and homogeneity among themselves. Some sections have doubtless a greater proportion of Dorobo or Masai blood than others, but the most important division of the tribe today is that imposed by district boundaries. There is, however, as well as a district boundary, a fairly sharp distinction (probably an increasing one) between the Cis-Chania and the Trans-Chania peoples, particularly in the degree of individualism incorporated into custom. To the Kikuyu themselves the two divisions are known geographically as Metume (North of the Chania) and Karura (South of the Chania). The people of Nyeri are known to the Southern Kikuyu as Andu a Gaki (Gaki is the name of a location in the Nyeri District) and to the Gichugu and Ndia as Andu a Nderi and Andu a Mathira. The Gichugu and Ndia call both the Fort Hall and [133] Kiambu Kikuyu Andu a Metume. Metume itself is a ridge south of the Maragua River.

C K 197 Uniformity within the Land Unit is clearly a matter relevant to the subject of this report, and linguistic similarities and dissimilarities have a bearing on uniformity or potential uniformity, though they are, of course, unreliable as evidence of tribal origins. There is in fact a very considerable uniformity in language throughout the Unit and an intelligent member of any tribe or sub-tribe therein (and indeed if we exclude Mukogodo, in the whole Province) can, with a

778 the branches. The customs appear to vary a good deal from place to place. The ritual cutting suggests a similarity with the ritual eating of a totem animal.

173 in regard to the origin of the system of land tenure it is interesting to note that Dr. Leakey says "The Kikuyu claim that in the immediate vicinity of Mukuruwe wa Gathanga where the tribe started there are nine flats of [p. 227] land which represent the original land holdings (1) of the nine daughters of Muumbi."

1. One must suspect some modern political influence here unless in this connection the Kikuyu take "land holdings" to mean "places where they cultivated" or "sites on which they lived."

An old man who lives just south of the Chania told me that the progenitor of the Kikuyu and Kamba tribes lived at Ithanga. One son of his went to Mukurue wa Gathanga and founded the Kikuyu tribe and another went to Ukamba and founded the Kamba. Another old man, who lives near the Karimeno, said that the Dorobo, the Masai, the Kamba, and the Kikuyu had a common origin, their ancestress being known as Nyamwathi, Nyokabi, Nyaikamba or Wakikuyu according to the one of the four tribes she founded which is referred to at the time; her husband, if any, was not named.

Direction of migration

167 The legend recorded by Mr. Tate, unlike Dr. Leakey's, accords well with the traditional information given by the Kikuyu (2) to

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2. Sir H. H. Johnston has suggested that the basal root of the tribal name is kuyu, fish, for he heard the name of the language given as Ikuyu or Gikuyu as well as Kikuyu. He remarks that -kuyu also means 'fish' in Kamba and "may be a name or nickname associated with a forgotten tribal totem." The fact that the Kikuyu eschew

The fact that the Kikuyu eschew

fish as food lends color to this derivation from a totemic name, particularly if the Kikuyu came from the east where they must have lived on the coast, or near one of the large rivers. The non-eating of fish by coast-dwellers is not unknown; there is a section called Makatwa, of the Swahili, even, living at Siyu and elsewhere (possibly of Galla or Somali or Barawa origin) to whom fish is taboo. The variation in the prefix, referred to by Johnston, is merely a manifestation of Dahl's law and a dialectal dislike of g which reduces it in some cases to inaudibility.

early officers of the Administration and others that the Kikuyu had migrated from a country to the east or south-east of Mount Kenya. Mr. G. A. S. Northcote (3), then District Commissioner, Kiambu, is

3. New Sir Geoffry.

quoted by Beech (4) in these words: "... we know the Kikuyu migrated from the east side of Mt. Kenya," and Beech himself states: "... there is indisputable evidence that the A-Kikuyu emigrated from the slopes of Mt. Kenya to this locality" (the present Chura Division of the Kiambu District) and refers to "the slopes of Embu whence the A-Kikuyu ... emigrated to Kikuyu and Kiambu (5)."

4. "Kikuyu system of land tenure" by Mervyn H. Beech,

5. Op. cit.

Dr. Leakey's story, however, may be taken as referring to the formation of the present Kikuyu tribe (as distinct from the Embu and Mbere, who have no such story) as having taken place in the Fort Hall District, which is certainly in accordance with tradition.

[p. 23] As for the areas of the Land Unit now mainly occupied by people indisputably Kikuyu (in the Nyeri, Fort Hall and Kiambu

167 174 p. 307 The foregoing conjectural account deals only with main migrations. There were doubtless minor movements which affected the composition of the tribes after they had settled more or less where they are today. An influx of Kamba from across the Tana would explain, for instance, the Kamba-like characteristics of the Mbere, though an original settlement of pre-Kamba to the north of the Tana and subsequent isolation from their fellow-tribesmen to the south of it would explain them just as well. But even when full allowance has been made for such minor movements, Major Orde Browne's version of the probable migrations, given in explanation of the ethnological make-up of the various minor tribes to the south and east of Kenya differs in some respects from mine, so that his views must be recorded here. He says: "... there seem to have been three influences at work upon the southern and eastern sides of Kenya. These may be classified as 1) a north-westerly invasion, or pressure, from across the Tana; 2) a south-westerly invasion from the north, via Meru; 3) a south-easterly invasion from the western side of the mountain. This classification is purely tentative, and it is impossible to produce much tangible evidence in support of it; it is merely offered as an explanation of the state of affairs found when European administration first appeared in the country."

101 167 174 If these three movements may be taken as subsidiary and, in general, later in date than the main migrations, there is no difficulty in reconciling them with my account. As to the first movement, it seems clear that the Mbere at least came under Kamba influence at some time or other, and a grafting of Kamba on to pre-Kikuyu stock would sufficiently explain their differences from their neighbours in the Unit. With regard to the second movement I have already surmised a southerly movement of the M imbi and Muthambi sections of the Meru people, but I have assumed it to be comparatively recent because the main Meru immigration into Meru proper was itself fairly late in the whole series of movements, and though it restricted the territory of the Chuka tribe, I can find no evidence that it affected the ethnological make-up of that tribe (except in so far as the Muthambi may have some degree of Chuka blood in their veins) or of the Embu tribe still further south. Major Orde Browne's third invasion also presents no difficulty if we take it to be nothing more than a backwash or series (1) of backwashes from a main flood which had

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1. An instance of such a backwash is possibly to be found in the Mbere occupation of Mwea. Mr. J.G.H. Hopkins, in a note in the Embu Political Record, gives the story of an old man Lukengu wa Ngunu, who told him "When my section of the Mbere came to Mwea Embu and Kikuyu lived right in the forest in the upper part of our present country. Even most of Mbere country was forest country ... We Mbere who went to Mwea were a later migration to this country than the main Mbere tribe; we are all the same tribe though." Lukengu named his ancesters for 7 generations, the earliest named being Rutere who, he said, was born at Donyo Sabuk and died there. There were then three generations who lived at Donyo Sabuk but were so harassed by the Masai that they eventually moved to Mwea. Two more generations then lived and died in Mwea between the Thiba and the Tana and the next moved to Mbere, where Lukengu was born.

101 167 174 passed on westwards. But of this movement Major Orde Browne says: "The Embu owed most to the Akikuyu proper, who became less and less characteristic of their main body as they travelled east, until the Ndia Kikuyu, although still calling themselves Kikuyu, adopted many customs and altered their language, until they might almost be considered a separate branch of their tribe. Next to them, the Embu (2) represented the first of the definite 'minor [p. 317] tribes'.

2. Mr. J.G.H. Hopkins, in a note in the Embu Political Record, states: "The Embu state that they always occupied their present country. Some of the old men can give the names of their forefathers for 8 generations back." I can confirm this in the case of one of my informants, Mugambi wa Ndigai wa Mutuamburi wa Muruanja wa Ndiiriri wa Njage wa Muthanga wa Thumi wa Ithanga wa Ngomango wa Igarua. Mugambi is an old man, probably well over sixty. He says all these named ancestors lived in the present Embu country.

101 The already appreciable differences between the Ndia Kikuyu and their more orthodox brothers become much emphasized. Language and customs differ more and more, while the name 'Kikuyu' is dropped, the people calling themselves 'Embu'." My contention is that the customary and linguistic differences between the Kikuyu and the Embu (the lack of clan cohesion for instance, and the more obvious infection of the "h-disease" in dialect in the former) suggest that the Kikuyu tribe is of later formation than the Embu, that it has been subject to a more recent migratory disturbance, and that, while recognizing the probability of occasional partial movements in the opposite direction, we must conclude that the main invasion was from the east, not to the east. I take the view that the Gichugu represent a people less divergent from the pre-Kikuyu type than do the Kikuyu proper, and that they have been longer in their present home and took less time to get there. If, however, we accept the Kikuyu tradition that their tribe had its origin in the Fort Hall District, Major Orde Browne's hypothesis of an actual migration from the west receives support, for the Gichugu and Ndia have precisely the same major clans as the Kikuyu proper. But the Gichugu-Ndia dialect is almost certainly an older form of Kikuyu and it may well be that the major clans were formed and named either in the Gichugu-Ndia area or at a time when the present Gichugu-Ndia dialect was also that of the newly-formed Kikuyu proper somewhere in their present home. This latter would require a back-wash of Kikuyu into Gichugu and Ndia (to explain the major clans), but we could not say that "the Embu owed most to the Akikuyu proper" because the latter would have to be considered a later formation in process of abandoning the pre-Kikuyu dialect and having no effect on the language or social organization of the Embu.

With regard to the northern tribes Major Orde Browne records: "... the Meru tribes merged gradually into their southern neighbors, and it becomes very difficult to say where the Meru really end. Divided among themselves into many sections, they hardly admit of any definite test of origin. The inhabitants of Mwimbe, however, would deny that they were Meru, as would their neighbors of the Igoji; but both sections are, nevertheless, strongly impregnated with Meru customs and idioms." But the mere fact that a section of a tribe, disgruntled for some reason, repudiates a common origin with

In Barnett and Njama E.1-4.1 (1961-1962) 1970 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

CHAPTER 1

AN INTRODUCTION

THE revolution with which we shall be concerned in this book occurred in the Kenya Colony and Protectorate between the years 1952 and 1957. With Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, Kenya comprised a portion of what was known as British East Africa. In the twilight of the colonial period, on 12 December 1963, this colony achieved its independence after sixty-odd years of British rule. While it is beyond the scope of the present work to deal comprehensively with this historic period, I do intend here to touch upon the major conditions and processes which underlay the revolt in question. To provide, so to speak, a background against which 'Mau Mau' may be more closely and, it is hoped, objectively understood.

Let us consider, in broad stroke, the context within which 'Mau Mau' arose. Kenya covers an area of about 245,060 square miles and is bounded on the east by the Indian Ocean, on the north-east and north by the Sudan, Somalia and Ethiopia, on the west by Uganda and on the south by Tanganyika. Of this territory, approximately three-fifths is poorly watered semi-desert occupied by pastoral peoples such as the Somali, Turkana, Samburu, Boran, Masai and Kalenjin tribes. Roughly, these semi-desert areas are located in the vast former Northern Frontier Province, in the south toward the Tanganyika border and in the east between the highlands and the coastal strip. The remainder of the country, in the central and western regions, includes the Great Rift Valley with its Lakes Naivasha, Nakuru and Rudolph, the mountain plateau to the east ranging from 5,000 to 9,000 feet above sea level and including the twin peaked Aberdare Range and snow-capped Mount Kenya, and the Kenya portion of the Lake Victoria Basin to the west.

The peoples occupying these latter regions comprise the bulk of Kenya's population and its six major 'tribes': the Luo and Baluhya in the west, the Kikuyu and closely related Embu and Meru in the east, the Kamba south and east of the Kikuyu, the

'Europeans' in the central Rift Valley region and the 'Asians' in Nairobi and the other towns. This region being relatively well-watered, most of its rural peoples practise agriculture combined with the keeping of cattle, sheep and goats.

According to the East African Census of 1948 the total African population of Kenya numbered better than five and a quarter million with the Kikuyu tribes comprising 30 per cent, the Luo 14 per cent, Baluhya 13 per cent and Kamba 12 per cent. In addition there were almost 30,000 Europeans and an Asian population (Indian, Arab and Goan) of over 100,000. Apart from the 9,000 European settlers of the 'White Highlands', the bulk of the non-African population lived in the administrative and commercial capital of Nairobi—some 300 miles inland from the coast and surrounded on three sides by the Kikuyu district of Kiambu, the ancient port city of Mombasa, or in one or another of the smaller towns of the Rift Valley Province.

Very generally, the three 'racial' aggregates occupied distinctive positions within Kenya's caste-class spectrum. The European community, though comprising less than 1 per cent of the total population, constituted a kind of 'high caste', reminiscent of long defunct European aristocracies, and occupied a highly privileged position in both the political and economic life of the colony. Internally segmented into a number of business, farming, civil servant, mission, professional and recreational groups, often with conflicting interests, the European community nevertheless constituted Kenya's most unified and integrated population segment. Cross-linked through a wide variety of associations whose memberships overlapped, and fully conscious of their common interests vis-à-vis both African and Asian groups, Europeans tended to react as a single body in the face of any external threat to their continued existence as a privileged minority.

Though ultimate policy and decision-making powers regarding the colony rested with the British Parliament, acting through its Ministers of State for the Colonies, Colonial Office and resident Governor, the European minority in Kenya exercised a virtual monopoly of power in the local governing institutions. Thus in 1948 the Kenya Legislative Council was composed of one Arab, five Indian and eleven European elected members,

When one adds to the European land, tax and wages policies, the restrictions placed upon African cultivation of certain profitable cash crops, such as *Arabica* coffee, and the *kipande* or labour registration system which obliged Africans, on pain of imprisonment, to obtain the signatures of their employers when they wished to seek other work or return to the reserves, it is not difficult to understand the emergence in Kenya of land hungry, labour-exporting African peasantries.

The Kikuyu figured prominently in this process. Of the several large agricultural tribes in Kenya, it is unquestionably the Kikuyu who were affected most immediately and deeply by European settlement. As Kenya's largest tribe, occupying the rich highland regions to the east and south of the Aberdare Range, the Kikuyu provided considerable portions of the land and most of the labour upon which the European farming economy was based.

While most of the White Highlands was obtained by the British from the pastoral Masai, large sections of Kikuyuland, particularly in the rich southern district of Kiambu, were alienated for European use. This land having been densely populated, its alienation left a large number of Kikuyu families landless and homeless. In addition, vast stretches of forest land bordering the region were made part of the Forest Reserve and removed from Kikuyu use.

Between 1907 and 1938 the sporadic nibbling away of small pieces of Kikuyu land—particularly in the Mwariga area of North Nyeri and around Nairobi—combined with the 1915 Crown Lands Ordinance, which made all Africans 'tenants at the will of the Crown', and the refusal of the Kenya Government to issue title deeds to Africans, fostered among the Kikuyu a growing insecurity of tenure and distrust of the white man's motives and intentions. In addition, a rapidly expanding population, reaching an average density of 183 per square mile by 1939 in the Kikuyu districts of Kiambu, Fort Hall and Nyeri (and rising to well over 500 in some areas such as South Nyeri), led to the increased fragmentation of holdings and spread of soil erosion. Land, previously allowed a period of fallow to regain its fertility, now had to be under continuous cultivation. The result, given no significant change in agricultural practice or technology, was a low and decreasing level of peasant produc-

9: Barnett and Njama E.1-4.5 (1961-1962) 1970 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

When one adds to the European land, tax and wages policies, the restrictions placed upon African cultivation of certain profitable cash crops, such as *Arabica* coffee, and the *kipande* or labor registration system which obliged Africans, on pain of imprisonment, to obtain the signatures of their employers when they wished to seek other work or return to the reserves, it is not difficult to understand the emergence in Kenya of land hungry, labor-exporting African peasantries.

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9t Barnett and Njama E.1-4.5 (1981-1982) 1970 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

Kikuyu society which were fundamentally incompatible with the imposed colonial system and conditioned an independent response to it. The first of these, a decentralized and democratic political system, fostered among the Kikuyu a deep-seated suspicion of the highly centralized, authoritarian system imposed by the British and a tendency to reject the legitimacy and resist the dictates of the latter. The second, an age-grade system wherein leadership emerged on the basis of demonstrated personal qualities such as skill, wisdom and ability, underlay the Kikuyu rejection of British-appointed 'chiefs' and their tendency to by-pass the latter and organize independent associations under popular leaders when the occasion arose to seek a redress of grievances. Let us now consider these factors in somewhat greater detail.

Prior to their forced incorporation within the British Empire during the 1890's, the Kikuyu peoples fell into four major tribal groupings—the Kikuyu, Meru, Chuka and Embu. They occupied the present administrative districts of Kiambu, Fort Hall, Nyeri, Embu and Meru, plus contiguous areas of varying extent later alienated by the British for settler use. The Kikuyu, or 'Kikuyu proper' as they are frequently termed, were divided into three politically autonomous sub-tribes, each occupying its own distinctive territory. North of the Chania River were the *Gaki* of Nyeri and *Metumi* of Murang'a or Fort Hall; south of the Chania were the *Karura* of Kiambu. A number of smaller sub-tribes of the Meru, Chuka and Embu occupied territories approximating to the current Embu and Meru districts. Though closely related both historically and culturally, in terms of language, religion, world-view and other customary beliefs and practices, neither the 'Kikuyu tribes' nor the 'Kikuyu proper' were integrated within a unitary or centralized political structure. In fact, even within the Kikuyu sub-tribes political power was held by a number of fairly small and semi-autonomous geopolitical groupings.

Among the Kikuyu proper, the largest localized kinship unit was the *mbari* or sub-clan, a land-holding group containing as many as 5,000 persons and comprised of the male descendants of a common ancestor together with their wives and dependent children. The head of the sub-clan, if not the original founder, was chosen from amongst the latter's brothers, sons or grandsons

9: Barnett and Njama E.I-4.5 (1961-1962) 1970 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

*668
*101
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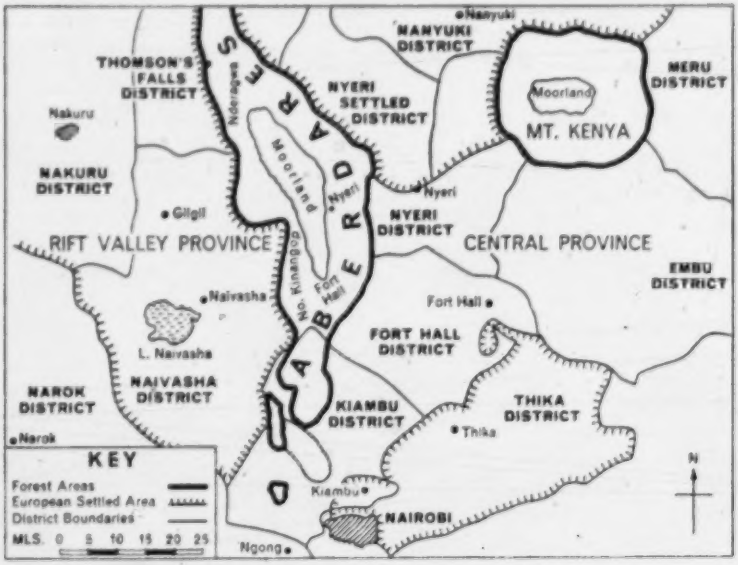
9: Barnett and Njama E.I-4, 5 (1961-1962) 1970 FL10 Kikuyu FL10

herding the animals. Sometimes, when playing with the other boys, I used these eggs like rocks, throwing them at my playmates. When I returned home from the pasture in the evening, I played with the Boer's many children. We often went swimming in the dam or into the forest to shoot birds with our slingshots or simply played and fought in the fields. The European had 12 children so there was always someone to play with. Other African squatter children spent time with me during the day while grazing or morn-



ing and evening times when they came for skimmed milk at the farm's dairy, which was near our hut and [for] which my father was responsible.

As my father had such large herds, which he could not look after himself—being in the big house with cooking and cleaning—he thought it wise to marry a second wife in 1932. By this time my mother had given birth to three more children, all of them girls. Not long after my father became a polygamist, my mother and the three sisters suddenly fell ill and died. I don't know for sure what caused their death, but according to what people said, they were victims of witchcraft—which means they died of quick-acting

14:Orr & Gilks D-4 (no date) 1931 FL12 Masai FL12
Kikuyu FL 10

The information collected directly was supplemented by the replies to two questionnaires issued by the Medical Department to district medical officers, medical missionaries, chiefs of tribes and others interested in the investigation. One questionnaire dealt with the dietary customs of natives and the other with the incidence and etiology of ulcers.

II.—FIELD WORK.

(a) Dietary Customs and Incidence of Disease in the Kikuyu and Masai Reserves.

Dr. J. W. Foster was sent out from the Rowett Research Institute to carry out this part of the investigation, and Dr. J. C. J. Callanan, of the Medical Service in Kenya, was specially detailed to work with him for the first five months.

The two reserves chosen for the investigation were the Kikuyu and Masai, the choice being made on account of the fact that the reserves adjoin while the dietary customs of the tribes are very different, the Akikuyu* being almost exclusively vegetarian and the Masai chiefly carnivorous.

The two Reserve areas were visited alternately during a period of over a year and a half, each trip occupying two or three months. Samples of all foodstuffs in common use were collected and despatched to the Rowett Institute for analysis. The samples consisted of articles of diet in the raw state, cooked foods, edible earths, salt substitutes, and natural mineral waters used in cooking.

A physical examination was made of 6,349 Kikuyu and 1,546 Masai† adult natives of both sexes and all ages. The examination was made under eighteen heads, including stature, weight, chest, abdomen and calf measurements; presence of anæmia; condition of teeth and gums; general physical and muscular development; strength as indicated by the dynamometer; presence of hernia, splenomegaly; ulcers.

A similar examination was made of 2,500 Kikuyu and 254 Masai children. The special object of this examination was to compare the tribal incidence, during the growth period, of osseous deformities, dental caries, periodontitis, anæmia, and general signs of malnutrition.

The subjects examined for physical condition were taken at random from the healthy section of the community in all parts of the Reserves. Great care was taken to exclude any sick native who presented himself. Apart from this, no selection was made, and the records may be taken as representatives of the average native of the Reserves.

An estimation was made of the diseases prevailing in the two tribes. Hospital returns were analysed, but, as it became apparent that, for

* The prefix "A" in Akikuyu has a collective sense, the term "Akikuyu" referring to the tribe as a whole, while the term "Kikuyu" has only an adjectival significance.

† It should be noted that the estimated populations of the Kikuyu and Masai Reserves at the end of 1929 were respectively 795,934 and 48,547.

many reasons, this did not give a complete picture of tribal morbidity, the plan was also adopted of travelling with a medical outfit and offering free treatment to sick natives. By this means, many thousands of natives were seen who, on account of such considerations as the distance involved, or inherent shyness, would never have appeared at a hospital.

(i) *The Akikuyu.*

The Akikuyu are a Bantu tribe, numbering about ¾ of a million, who occupy part of the highlands of Kenya between the equator and 1 deg. south. They are agriculturists and live on a diet which is chiefly vegetarian. Beef may be almost entirely discounted from the diet ; game, fish, birds and eggs are ignored, and the eating of goats and sheep is almost confined to the old men. A goat or ram is slaughtered only at a marriage or other feast, or to remove "thahu" (ceremonial uncleanness). On such an occasion, the old men eat the entire animal with the exception of one leg and the viscera, which are divided among the women and children. Meat cannot therefore be regarded as forming a regular part of the dietary. The amount eaten by the women and children must be insignificant. It should be noted, however, that although so little meat is eaten the natives possess large herds of goats. These are used mainly as currency, instead of as a source of supply of milk and meat.

There are very few cattle in this Reserve and those are in the hands of a wealthy minority. The milk yield of native cows, under native management, is very low. In most cases it probably does not exceed 100 gallons per annum. Hence, very little cow's milk is available.

The great bulk of the Kikuyu diet consists of cereals, tubers, plantains, legumes and green leaves. The males show a preference for cereals and tubers, 60 per cent. of their diet consisting of maize or millet, and sweet potatoes accounting for a further 25 per cent. The women also subsist chiefly on these articles, but add more liberal quantities of legumes and plantains and have a virtual monopoly of the green leaves.

In addition to natural foodstuffs, a common article of diet, especially among the women, is the earth from salt licks. In all the native markets these edible earths are displayed for sale. Another common practice throughout the Kikuyu Reserve is the preparation of a salt substitute by the burning of swamp plants. During recent times Magadi soda has largely replaced these salt substitutes. Evidence was obtained that the consumption of edible earths and plant ashes is more common amongst the women than the men. It appears that the practice is for young children of both sexes to be given food containing these salt substitutes up to about the age of 5 years. Afterwards the custom appears to be confined to the females, and the young boys and men get little, if any. In addition to these salt substitutes, water from special springs is highly esteemed for human consumption and is used in cooking.